

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2315

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 3278

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS: OPPOSITIONIST SENTIMENT WITHIN THE
KBL

REF: MANILA 2940

1. DURING A CONVERSATION IN CEBU FEBRUARY 24 KBL
CANDIDATE EMILION OSMENA OUTLINED TO POL COUNSELOR THE
ROLE HE ENVISAGES PLAYING IN THE INTERIM PARLIAMENT SHOULD
HE BE ELECTED. OSMENA INSISTED THAT HE HAD NOT SOLD OUT
TO MARCOS BY ACCEPTING A POSITION ON THE REGION VII KBL
SLATE. HE WAS PREPARED TO PLAY BALL WITH MARCOS UP TO
A POINT BUT THAT HE HAD NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE PRESIDENT
WHOM HE DESCRIBED FLATLY AS A DICTATOR BENT ON PERPETUATING
HIS POWER. DURING THE CAMPAIGN AND LATER ON IN THE LEGIS-
LATIVE ASSEMBLY OSMENA INTENDED TO SPEAK HIS MIND (SEE
CEBU SEPTTEL). HE SAID THAT MARCOS UNDERSTOOD AND HAD
AGREED TO THIS POSTURE ON THE PART OF OSMENA.

2. OSMENA'S PURPOSE IS TO PUSH MARCOS TOWARD NORMALIZATION.
HE BELIEVES HE CAN PLAY SUCH A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE FROM WITHIN
THE RANKS OF THE KBL BUT CONCEDES THAT IT WILL NOT BE
WASY. HE IS AWARE THAT, IF HE PUSHES TOO HARD, THE
MARCOS PARANOIA MIGHT SURFACE. OSMENA STATED THAT HE
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HAS IDENTIFIED APPROXIMATELY 40 PEOPLE ON THE KBL SLATE
NATION-WIDE WHOM HE CONSIDERS INDEPENDENT/
OPPOSITIONIST IN OUTLOOK AND WHO HE SUGGESTED MIGHT MAKE
UP A SORT OF INTRAMURAL "OPPOSITION" IN THE INTERIM
PARLIAMENT AFTER IT IS FORMED.

3. COMMENT: OSMENA'S THESIS OF A POSSIBLE CONSTRUCTIVE

OPPOSITIONIST ELEMENT WITHIN THE KBL LEGISLATIVE RANKS
NEEDS TO BE TREATED WITH RESERVE. CLEARLY THERE ARE A
NUMBER OF KBL CANDIDATES WHO HAVE A CERTAIN INDEPENDENCE
OF SPIRIT AND WHO MIGHT BE WILLING, IN VARYING DEGREES,
TO STAND UP TO MARCOS ON IMPORTANT ISSUES. OSEMAN'S
RUNNING MATE IN REGION VII, VICTOR DE LA SERNA, AND
"THIRD FORCER" SALVADOR LAUREL IN REGION IVA ARE
POSSIBLE EXAMPLES. WE HAVE DOUBTS, HOWEVER, AS TO HOW
COHESIVE A GROUPING THIS MIGHT BECOME AND HOW
INFLUENTIAL IT MIGHT BE IN SHAPING GOP POLICIES. ON
THE BASIS OF NUMBERS ALONE IT WOULD APPEAR THAT SUCH
AN ELEMENT WOULD POSE NO THREAT TO MARCOS' EFFECTIVE
CONTROL OF THE NEW BODY. IN ANY CASE IT WILL BE
OF INTEREST TO MONITOR THE POSSIBLE EMERGENCE OF SUCH A
GROUPING AFTER THE IBP IS FORMED.
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